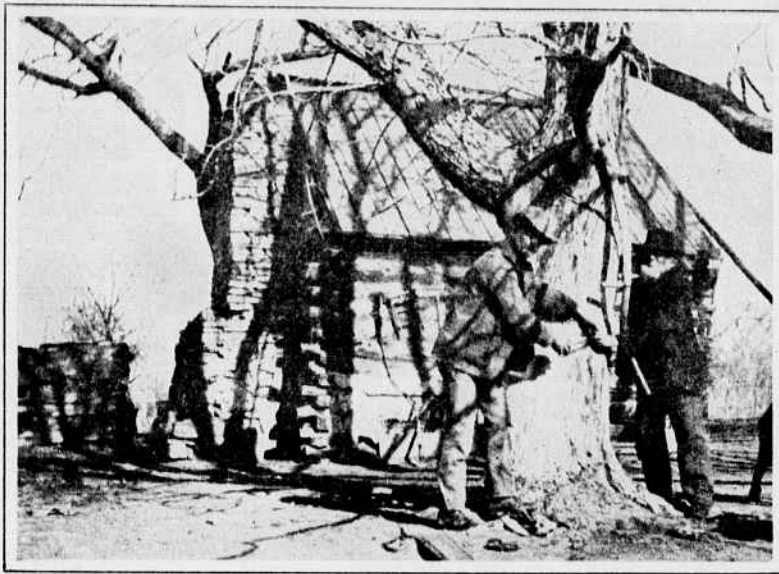


He Planted This Tree



Why don't you plant a tree next spring? It will shade your whole house by the time your whiskers are as white as Mr. Smead's.

ON the banks of the St. Vrain River in northern Colorado stands a little weather-stained log cabin and a big old cottonwood tree. The great plains, like a sea, sweep away toward the east. Westward, terracing high above, rise the Rocky Mountains. The cabin was built by Chester L. Smead in 1859. That year, too, he planted this cottonwood tree. He was proud to be snapped while measuring the three-foot tree of his early planting.

Every tree is a silent spectator of events and lives an adventurous life. This cabin, standing midway between Denver and the Estes Park region, became a half-way house on a famous highway; and, through the years, entertained trappers, hunters, prairie-schooner travelers, miners and prospectors.

Among the notables who have stood beneath the cottonwood are Helen Hunt; Miss Isabella L. Bird, the greatest of women travelers; Miss Anna Dickinson, the first woman to climb Long's Peak; Dr. F. V. Hayden, father of the Yellowstone National Park; Rocky Mountain Jim; Lord Dunraven; and Albert Bierstadt. Enos Mills.

The Tower of Silence

By W. E. AUGHINBAUGH

IN the far East nearly all great religious movements have originated. We of the West can not appreciate the intensity of feeling with which these people cling to their belief, or how sincere they are in carrying out its observance according to the exact letter of the law.

A Mohammedan will positively die in preference to having any portion of his body amputated, because the Koran commands him to appear before Allah as he came upon earth. A Buddhist will absolutely not take a medicine guaranteed to restore his health, if life has been sacrificed to compound it. A Hindoo, though starving, will throw away his food, and go hungry, if the shadow of an unbeliever or low-caste person falls upon it. Of all the teeming millions of the East, none adhere so tenaciously to their religion or observe its strange customs so minutely as the Parsees.

When Mohammed, during his holy war of invasion and conquest, reached Persia, he found a peaceful people, tilling their stony fields and tending their little flocks. They believed, in accordance with the teachings of Zoroaster, in keeping pure and preserving from contamination what they called the four elements—namely, earth, air, fire, and water.

The fierce warriors of the Prophet had

no great difficulty in conquering this docile race, and offered them their lives on condition that they accept his teachings in all things. Some of them did, and as a consequence Persia is to-day a Mohammedan land. Others went into the fastness of the barren mountains.

The greater portion, however, of this wonderful sect refused to accept faith in Islam and deserted Persia. For more than three hundred years they wandered down the western shores of the Persian Gulf, observing the tenets of Zoroaster's doctrines, being driven farther and farther to the south, until they finally reached Surat in India, where they met a Hindoo prince, whom they told of their wanderings. He took compassion on them and guaranteed them an asylum within his domains, with freedom to practise their religious rites, provided they would wear a hat made in the shape of a cow's hoof, to show that they were under the protection of the cow, this being a sacred animal according to Hindoo mythology. That was much over a thousand years ago; yet the Parsees of India to-day wear the same head-covering, in gratitude to the liberal-minded man who first helped them.

One of the consequences of their curious belief that earth, air, fire, and water were sacred and should not be defiled resulted in the disposing of their dead in a most peculiar manner. After death, the members of this sect are carried in an iron cradle to what is called the Tower of Silence. The one in Bombay is perhaps 150 feet high and 75 to 100 feet in diameter. It has only one opening, and entrance through this door of the dead is denied to all but priests of the order. In the interior of these towers of silence are arranged three sets of shelves—the inner one for the bodies of children, the middle one for the remains of women, and the outer for the cadavers of males. On the appropriate shelf the priests deposit the body and withdraw. Within twenty minutes vultures, which have been sitting around the wall of the structure, have cleaned the corpse to the bones, which ultimately disintegrate and drop into a receptacle filled with sand and charcoal, gradually turning into dust.

I have in my possession a picture—rather too gruesome for publication—showing two dead Parsees lying at the top of the Tower of Silence. How I obtained this photograph I shall never tell. I doubt if any white man ever obtained a similar photograph—and lived.

How Did the Censor Miss This?

ON account of the severity with which the censor wields his pen, and because of other reasons, pictures from "the front," in the European conflict, have been difficult to obtain. For reasons that they know best, the belligerents have barred the camera-man from many scenes of action which he wished to snap. On the German frontier especially, the camera is looked upon with almost as much suspicion as a bomb.

The accompanying photographs, however, show some interesting details of warfare. They show the soldiers in action, the firing of cannon, the explosion of shells, and the general maneuvering in the trenches.

But, to be quite frank, if they have succeeded in their purpose of fooling the observer, these war scenes were staged and photographed right here in our own United States. One day, a few weeks ago, the photographer motored over to a sand-pile known to New Yorkers as the "Jersey bog," carrying his camera, a dozen or so toy tin soldiers, miniature field ordnance, some blasting powder, fuse, and other "war impedimenta."

It was by no means an easy matter to set the scenes and time the camera so as to snap the guns in action. The trenches were dug from three to four inches deep in the sand, and the embankments were built up proportionately. The preparing of the soldiers for action was perhaps the most difficult matter, because they all tended to assume the same rigid posture. It was therefore necessary to bend them into the proper shapes, and in some cases to paint them, to give the proper variation of dress. The trees were carefully selected twigs stuck into the sand. The smoke and flash effects were obtained by placing small quantities of blasting powder in holes dug in the sand, igniting the powder by means of fuses.

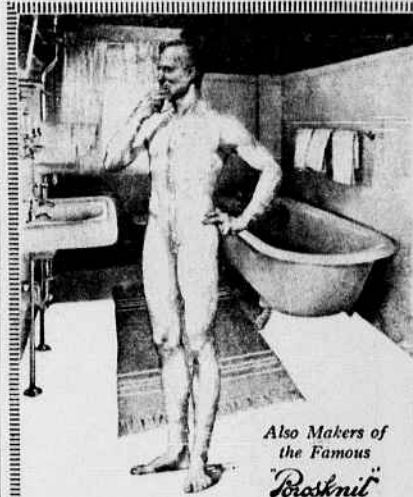
Powder was also placed in the mouths of the cannon and set off in a similar manner.

When everything was ready, the fuses were lighted and the camera bulb pressed at the right second.

A retired military man to whom the "war" photographs were shown was completely victimized by the hoax.



Is this not a wonderful picture of the brave German troops in action on the Western front? Yes, it is not.



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